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DEVELOPMENT SIMPLIFIES PRODUCTION OF FABRIC IN LIVING COLOR

WASHINGTON—U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists are expanding the menu of colors used to make stone-washed and iced-washed garments.

When consumers buy a denim garment, their color choices are pretty well limited to blue and black. But, a new stone-finishing technique developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service makes it easier for consumers to buy denim garments in a multitude of colors.

"Before this process was developed, color selection of a stone-washed or ice-washed garment had to be made before it even became a garment," Robert J. Harper, research chemist at ARS' Southern Regional Research Center in New Orleans said today at the national meeting of the American Chemical Society.

"Blue and black are used by industry primarily because it wants something it can use economically in large volume. This new approach is designed to produce garments in a wide variety of colors," said Harper.

The new process is achieved by injecting chemicals that either attract or repel dyes into porous volcanic rocks called pumice stones, which are used to make stone-washed and ice-washed garments.

In conventional stone-washed processes, dyed fabric is placed in a tumbler with the porous stones. The stones wear down the fabric surface, creating an irregular pattern.

A more irregular pattern occurs on fabric that has been ice washed. This dyeing technique is achieved by soaking porous stones in bleach or other strong oxides, Harper said. These stones are placed in a tumbler with dyed garments and the bleach removes dye as the stones come in contact with the fabric, creating the irregular look.

The new stone-dyeing methods are based on a ARS patented process that allows cotton to be dyed after a no-wrinkle finish is applied.

In one technique, fabric is placed in a tumbler with stones soaked in chemicals that carry a positive charge and accept certain dyes once fixed in the fabric, Harper said. Only those areas of the fabric touched by the stones will dye during a subsequent step.

A second approach is soaking stones in alkaline, which removes the no-wrinkle finish, he said. The areas of fabric touched by these stones repel dyes, keeping those areas white for an irregular design.

Both methods allow industry and retailers to be more responsive to consumer demand, said Harper.

“With this method, if you go to a store it will be easier to find a stone-washed jacket in a variety of colors. Under the old system you’re just out of luck. You also get the no-wrinkle advantage with the new system,” said Harper.

These and related developments broaden the appearance and color ranges that can be produced in garment dyeing, he said.

“This all might sound a little wild, but then again who would have thought that stone-washed jeans would have become so popular,” Harper added.

Bruce Kinzel (301) 344-2739

Issued: April 18, 1991

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USDA ISSUES PAYMENT LIMITATION AND PAYMENT ELIGIBILITY RULES

WASHINGTON, April 18—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced that husbands and wives may qualify as separate persons under the Commodity Credit Corporation’s payment-limitation rules if they do not receive payment from more than one source.

Madigan said the final rule also clarifies that an interest in an estate will not be considered another source.

These amendments form part of the final rules that govern the statutory payment-limitation and payment-eligibility provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990. Agricultural producers receive payments for participating in programs that help adjust production and may add to the soundness of the environment.

Madigan said the new payment-limitation and payment-eligibility rules modify existing rules, affecting the following:

—For the first time, the wool and mohair programs fall under payment limitation rules. In 1991, payments for each program are limited to

\$200,000 per person. In addition, each person must also be “actively engaged in farming.”

—A new inheritance provision allows producers who inherit land subject to a Conservation Reserve Program contract to earn payment without regard to any amount received under prior CRP contracts. For example, a producer who had reached the \$50,000-payment limitation and who inherited land enrolled in the CRP could inherit another CRP contract and receive payments under the second contract in an amount up to \$50,000.

—In order for a trust to be considered “actively engaged in farming,” the trust must have a valid tax identification number, unless the trust is revocable and the grantor is the sole income beneficiary. In this case the grantor’s tax identification number may be used.

The provisions and procedures of the payment limitation resolutions were published in today’s Federal Register.

John C. Ryan (202) 447-8207

#

USDA RAISES BRUCELLOSIS INDEMNITIES FOR CATTLE HERD DEPOPULATION

WASHINGTON, April 19—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will raise the amount of federal indemnities by \$100 for exposed nonregistered cattle or bison when an entire herd is destroyed as a result of the state-federal brucellosis eradication program, effective April 23. The indemnity paid for individual reactor cattle and bison nationwide will remain unchanged.

In Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, the maximum indemnity for herds of exposed cattle or bison will be \$250 per animal regardless of type or registration, in line with the higher market prices in those areas. In all other states, the maximum indemnity will be \$250 for exposed registered cattle and nonregistered dairy cattle; \$150 for nonregistered cattle other than dairy cattle; and \$150 for bison.

“The increased indemnity will give herd owners added financial incentive to destroy herds affected with brucellosis,” said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. “As a result, we will be able to move faster on eradicating brucellosis from the United States.”

Brucellosis, sometimes called Bang's disease, causes abortion, reduced fertility and lower milk yields in cattle. Humans can be infected with brucellosis by drinking unpasteurized milk from infected cows or by handling aborted fetuses. Nationwide, cattle producers still incur annual production losses of more than \$12 million from brucellosis, even though the disease has been eradicated from 29 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The increase in indemnity rates for herd destruction has been under consideration since 1987, and those affected had an opportunity to comment up to December 28 of that year, Glosser said. Altogether, 43 comments on the proposed increase were received. The concerns expressed are discussed in the final rule implementing the change, which is being published as docket 88-004 in the April 23 Federal Register.

Margaret Webb (301) 436-6573

#

USDA EXTENSION SERVICE RELEASES LEAN MEAT EDUCATION MATERIALS

WASHINGTON, April 19—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service has developed a new program to assist consumers and others in choosing and preparing lean meats.

Called "The Consumer's Choice—Lean Meat," it features information on the production of lean, safe meat; nutrition and health; purchasing lean meats; safe preparation; and wise selection of "convenience" meat products, according to Myron Johnsrud, ES administrator.

Each section can be used in an educational program or as an information source for media, food professionals and interested organizations.

"The program incorporates the most current research available on lean meats," Johnsrud said. "The materials were written for various age and economic groups, with varying levels of knowledge about meats."

The program was a cooperative effort of Extension specialists from the University of Florida, Kansas State University and Texas A & M University. An advisory group consisting of representatives from commodity groups and professional health organizations assisted during the various stages of development, review and pilot testing of the project.

The program is available in county Extension Service offices throughout the United States. Organizations can purchase copies of the program compendium for \$17 by writing to: Meat Modules #SP75, Bldg. 440, University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, Gainesville, Fla. 32611, Attention—Chic Hinton; telephone (904) 392-1765.

For more information on the program, contact Beth Branthaver, USDA Extension Service, 202-447-8489.

Cathy Bridwell (202) 447-6084

#

USDA ISSUES STATE DATA ON 10TH CRP SIGNUP

WASHINGTON, APRIL 19—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued a state breakdown of the bidding for the Conservation Reserve Program during the 10th signup, March 4 through March 15.

Of the 564,989 acres tentatively accepted, over 27,867 require usefullife easements of 15 or 30 years. Of these, 19,666 acres are for wildlife habitat improvement; 3,442 for filter strips; 1,952 for salt-tolerant grasses to control salinity; 1,071 for field windbreaks; 941 for grassed waterways; 437 for contour grass strips; 328 for shelterbelts and 29 acres for living snow fences. In addition, more than 346 miles of filterstrips may also be installed and trees are to be planted on 101,000 acres.

The following table provides detailed information on 10th signup bids by State:

Table on following page.

State	Bids	Acres Bid	Bids Approved	Acres Approved	Trees Approved	Annual Rental Payments
National Summary	29,286	2,453,686	10,681	564,989	101,317	\$30,487,259
Alabama	621	32,252	380	18,009	11,871	797,281
Alaska	4	1,532	2	691	0	21,230
Arizona	1	598	0	0	0	0
Arkansas	266	22,797	124	10,739	8,667	505,822
California	64	23,804	1	87	0	4,350
Colorado	410	120,211	20	2,527	0	95,598
Connecticu	3	30	0	0	0	0
Delaware	5	99	3	26	0	1,924
Florida	233	12,050	79	3,051	2,880	125,205
Georgia	777	38,771	280	13,209	11,813	565,440
Hawaii	1	592	1	592	0	47,360
Idaho	242	49,294	95	20,635	290	937,040
Illinois	1,896	63,650	1,045	32,734	3,446	2,444,747
Indiana	1,063	37,644	541	16,723	2,298	1,264,483
Iowa	2,499	99,477	1,197	46,726	1,914	3,879,959
Kansas	1,880	172,475	194	11,075	127	568,717
Kentucky	316	15,513	207	8,858	396	521,083
Louisiana	179	11,182	127	7,878	4,131	342,960
Maine	32	1,573	9	278	18	13,833
Maryland	102	2,401	70	1,638	237	122,354
Massachusetts	10	69	0	0	0	0
Michigan	1,223	58,068	543	22,623	2,423	1,258,386
Minnesota	1,656	99,942	636	27,736	3,133	1,326,766
Mississippi	898	56,187	623	39,145	27,122	1,719,429
Missouri	1,127	73,664	595	37,613	2,325	2,349,280
Montana	1,126	450,365	153	51,258	0	1,791,984
Nebraska	1,587	122,609	386	13,654	214	825,857
Nevada	1	487	0	0	0	0
New Hampshire	1	11	1	11	0	558
New Jersey	1	22	0	0	0	0
New Mexico	22	5,324	1	36	0	1,155
New York	199	11,272	65	3,574	317	152,657
North Carolin	395	7,874	197	4,351	2,704	191,470
North Dakota	1,204	148,330	110	14,849	3	505,940
Ohio	1,125	49,262	612	23,361	1,067	1,661,708
Oklahoma	410	45,229	64	6,473	464	269,326

Oregon	76	15,085	14	2,686	149	125,296
Pennsylvania	367	13,819	67	2,161	71	121,814
Puerto Rico	1	15	1	15	0	1,125
South Carolin	571	20,248	121	3,605	2,132	141,159
South Dakota	1,004	148,934	145	6,381	8	254,456
Tennessee	585	25,179	316	12,909	1,177	651,910
Texas	1,083	212,531	268	45,010	1,543	1,806,380
Utah	52	6,734	0	0	0	0
Vermont	1	67	0	0	0	0
Virginia	284	6,958	88	1,467	504	82,184
Washington	303	52,147	103	12,877	228	688,610
West Virginia	12	420	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin	2,296	81,173	1,197	37,715	7,644	2,300,406
Wyoming	72	35,711	0	0	0	0

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-8206

#

MADIGAN APPOINTS MEMBERS TO NATIONAL COUNCIL ON COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION

WASHINGTON, April 22—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today appointed nine new members and reappointed five others to the National Advisory Council on Commodity Distribution.

“Each of these appointees provides a unique perspective on food distribution and has shown a strong interest in the betterment of the nation’s commodity programs,” Madigan said. “These programs play an important role in the nation’s economy. Not only do they provide food for our nation’s schools and supplement the diets of our citizens, but they also help strengthen the agricultural market for foods produced by American farmers.”

Last year, USDA provided more than \$1 billion worth of commodities for distribution to schools, Indian reservations, elderly feeding programs, pregnant and breastfeeding women and their young children, food banks and soup kitchens.

New members of the council are Barry D. Wynn, Spartanburg, S.C.; Anthony R. Quintana, Denver, Colo.; Bonnie Athas, Salt Lake City, Utah; Victor Lujan, Santa Fe, N.M.; Mary Jo Tuckwell, Eau Claire, Wis.; John Peukert, Rialto, Calif.; Betty F. Marcelynas, Olympia, Wash.; Suzanne C. Rice, Lorain, Ohio; and Mildred B. Nickens,

Catonsville, Md.

Reappointed to the council are James D. Cockman, Greenville, S.C.; Mary Klatko, Arnold, Md.; Foylen L. Bryant, Jacksonville, Fla.; Matt F. Gorges, Harlingen, Texas; and Ronald A. Schuler, Walnut Creek, Calif.

The National Advisory Council on Commodity Distribution was established in 1988 to provide guidance to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Congress on regulations and policy developments regarding commodity distribution.

Members are appointed for two-year terms and meet twice annually. Each year, they submit a report to the Congress with recommendations on improvements to the commodity distribution system.

Among the council members are school food service directors and representatives from state distributing agencies, commercial distributors and processors, agricultural agencies, food banks, state advisory councils, the Child Care Food Program, the Nutrition Program for the Elderly, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

Phil Shanholtzer (703) 756-3286

#

FRIENDSHIP GARDEN DEDICATED; ILLUSTRATES NEW AMERICAN GARDEN ETHIC

WASHINGTON, April 24—America's Friendship Garden will be dedicated today at the U.S. National Arboretum here in a 1:30 p.m. ceremony.

Arboretum Director H. Marc Cathey said the Friendship Garden is designed to illustrate the new American garden ethic being advocated by the National Arboretum—gardens and landscapes planned to thrive with minimal maintenance.

Instead of formal expanses of green lawns anchored by shade trees at the corners and shrubs against the house, he said, the concept calls for gardens filled with plants that do not have constant need to be watered, fertilized, pruned or sprayed for insects.

“This new garden shows how a beautiful landscape can be created that has interest and color all year round without the need for continual work or pesticides,” Cathey said.

A 444-acre world center for the study of woody landscape plants in Washington D.C., the U.S. National Arboretum is part of the Agricultural Research Service, the chief research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Funds for the Friendship Garden were privately raised and donated by the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc.

“This garden is the National Council’s gift to the people of the United States to show how our gardens of the 21st century must be designed and maintained,” said Mrs. C. Manning Smith, council president. “We want to make every citizen an active architect of the environment in an age when there is so much neglect.”

Donations for the construction of the garden and to fund a horticultural fellowship each summer to work on the garden came from the more than 250,000 members of the National Council of State Garden Clubs.

Clubs from every state participated in the fund raising. Thirteen states contributed \$1 or more per member to fund the garden.

All of the 500 types of plants in the Friendship Garden were selected with year-round interest in mind. The plants are placed in groupings and drifts that reflect the way they would be found naturally.

“The picture the plants create changes as the seasons change,” Cathey said.

Emphasis in the garden is on perennials, grasses, evergreen ground covers, and small shrubs and trees. But the spring garden is filled with 60,000 flowering bulbs.

Two ribbons of lawn have been left to provide places for visitors to stroll.

The landscape architectural firm Oehme van Sweden of Washington D.C. donated their services to design the garden.

Kim Kaplan (301) 344-3932

#

AMERICANS MAY EAT MORE THAN THE EXPERTS THINK

WASHINGTON, April 25—Americans may be consuming substantially more calories than surveys show, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist reported today.

Walter Mertz, director of the Beltsville, Md., Human Nutrition Research Center, a part of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, said findings from 12 long-term studies at the center "suggest a substantial underestimation of food intake for the U.S. population in general."

The 266 volunteers participating in the studies reported consuming an average 18 percent fewer calories on food intake records prior to the studies than they actually needed to maintain weight during the studies, Mertz said today at the annual meeting of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in Atlanta.

Eighty-one percent of the volunteers underreported their calorie intake, while only 8 percent overreported. The other 11 percent were accurate to within 100 calories, he said, noting there was no difference in reporting based on the volunteers' gender, age or weight.

If substantiated in larger studies, the findings have far-reaching implications, he said. "The vast majority of food consumption and nutrient intake data comes from individuals' recalling or recording what they ate.

"We use this data to conclude that Americans get too little of certain nutrients," he said, such as vitamin B6, zinc, magnesium and iron for women. "If you add food providing 18 percent more calories to the estimates, that would be a substantial increase in nutrient intake."

It could also help explain why the nation's food intake data don't account for the population's increasing weight. Average body weight of the American population went up between the late 1960's and the late 1970's while reported food intake went down, he said.

Agencies within USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services rely on the database to judge the nutritional status of the U.S. population and develop guidelines. It helps U.S. Department of Commerce personnel assess consumer consumption patterns and USDA personnel track commodity use.

And, researchers use it to compare U.S. eating habits with those of other countries and correlate differences with incidence of diseases such as heart disease and cancer.

“We need larger studies to see if our Beltsville volunteers are representative of the general population—that the 18 percent ‘fudge factor’ is accurate,” Mertz said, adding that this study “is the largest of its type ever done to date.”

The 266 volunteers—from 21 to 64 years old—recorded all they ate for at least seven days and as long as 36 days prior to the studies, but only after they were trained to keep accurate records.

Researchers then translated these records into calories. They also estimated the volunteers’ energy requirements based on body weight, height and activity. Then the volunteers were fed diets providing these requirements under close supervision. During each study, the volunteers were weighed five times a week, and their calorie intake was adjusted if they gained or lost.

Mertz said his findings agree very closely with a recent report from the United Kingdom. Thirty-one subjects, also trained to keep accurate records, reported consuming an average 20 percent fewer calories than they actually burned each day. And the proportion of subjects underreporting—84 percent—was very close to the 81 percent in the Beltsville studies.

Why do people underreport? “We simply don’t know,” Mertz said, adding that “a thorough study of the psychological basis for reporting food intake appears to be needed.

“I’m reasonably sure it’s not conscious cheating,” he said. “I suspect that when you require somebody to report, they may eat less.” He pointed out that programs designed to help people lose weight or stop smoking ask people to record everything they eat or smoke each day.

Underreporting could be “subconsciously motivated by the widespread belief in our society that maintaining a low body weight contributes to good health,” he said. In some countries, where people tend to overreport their intake, a fat body is a sign of wealth. “Very slim people show they don’t get enough to eat.”

What’s more, underreporting is compounded when people are asked to collect duplicate samples of everything they eat for laboratory analysis, he said. When volunteers in a separate year-long study at Beltsville collected duplicate samples, intakes were reduced by another 13 percent.

“Duplicate sample collection is considered the gold standard of food intake assessment,” said Mertz, “but it is the least accurate.”

Judy McBride (301) 344-4095

#

USDA TO CHARGE FEES FOR INSPECTING PASSENGER BAGGAGE AND COMMERCIAL VESSELS

WASHINGTON, April 23—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will charge user fees to cover the cost of conducting inspections for agricultural products that could carry plant pests and animal diseases into the continental United States. The fees will begin in two stages.

As of May 13, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will charge user fees for inspecting airline passengers' baggage, commercial vessels, railcars and trucks arriving from international sources.

As of Aug. 1, APHIS also will charge user fees for inspecting airline passengers' baggage departing Hawaii and Puerto Rico for destinations in the continental United States.

The fee will be \$2 for airline passengers arriving from foreign countries, Hawaii or Puerto Rico; \$2 for a commercial truck crossing from Mexico; \$7 for a loaded railroad car crossing from Mexico; and \$544 for a commercial vessel of 100 net tons or more entering a U.S. port.

APHIS published a proposed rule for instituting user fees in the Feb. 27 Federal Register. The agency received 61 comments on that proposal during the 15-day comment period, according to APHIS Administrator James W. Glosser.

"We have carefully considered the comments received," Glosser said. "The budget compromise that was signed into law last November requires APHIS to institute user fees as soon as possible in order to meet deficit reduction goals."

Many comments said the proposed April 1 implementation date for collecting user fees should be delayed, according to Glosser. Among the reasons given for the delay were to allow adequate time to reprogram computers and to inform and train ticket agents about the new requirements.

"In response to those comments, we have decided to adjust the implementation dates to give affected parties more time to prepare," Glosser said.

User fees will be collected for APHIS by the U.S. Customs Service, airline ticket agents and transportation companies. APHIS will follow methods of collecting, remitting and auditing user fees developed by the U.S. Customs Service. The money will be deposited in a designated

account in the U.S. Treasury, which will then reimburse APHIS for appropriations approved by the Congress.

Glosser said the budget agreement reached last November also authorizes APHIS to collect fees from airline companies to inspect planes arriving in the United States; from exporters for export certificates issued for plant and animal products; and from users of veterinary diagnostic services. No mechanism currently exists to collect these fees. Glosser said APHIS will propose user fees for these activities in the future.

APHIS inspections are needed to keep out plant pests and animal diseases that are not present in the continental United States. Failure to intercept items covered by an agricultural quarantine can lead to a costly infestation, such as the 1990 Mediterranean fruit fly outbreak in California. More than \$65 million was spent to eradicate the insect from that state.

The major risk is from travelers who bring back fruits, vegetables, meats, plants, and various agricultural souvenirs from trips to foreign countries, Hawaii or Puerto Rico. Undeclared agricultural items intercepted by APHIS inspectors can lead to fines ranging from \$50 to \$1,000.

Notice of the final rule for international user fees was published in the April 12 Federal Register. Notice of the final rule for domestic user fees will be published in the April 23 Federal Register.

Edwin Moffett (202) 447-4026

#

USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR MARCH

WASHINGTON, April 24—Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for March 1991:

Chart on next page

Cost of food at home for a week in March 1991

	-----Food plans-----			
	(In Dollars)			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate cost	Liberal
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-50 years)	48.90	61.60	75.90	94.30
Family of 2 (51 years and over)	46.40	59.40	73.00	87.30
Family of 4 with preschool children	71.30	88.80	108.40	133.20
Family of 4 with elemen- tary schoolchildren	81.60	104.30	130.30	157.00
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	12.90	15.70	18.30	22.20
3-5 years	13.90	17.10	21.10	25.30
6-8 years	16.90	22.60	28.30	33.00
9-11 years	20.20	25.70	33.00	38.30
Females:				
12-19 years	21.10	25.20	30.50	36.90
20-50 years	21.20	26.20	31.80	40.70
51 and over	21.00	25.60	31.50	37.60
Males:				
12-14 years	20.90	29.10	36.20	42.60
15-19 years	21.70	30.00	37.30	43.30
20-50 years	23.30	29.80	37.20	45.00
51 and over	21.20	28.40	34.90	41.80

USDA’s Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans—thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost, and liberal.

Sue Ann Ritchko, HNIS administrator, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

In computing the costs, USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

“USDA costs are only guides to spending,” Ritchko said. “Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes, and how much food is prepared at home.”

“Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable,” she said. “The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan.”

To use the chart to estimate your family’s food costs:

—For members eating all meals at home—or carried from home—use the amounts shown in the chart.

—For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent for each meal eaten away from home from the amount shown for the appropriate family member. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one fourth the cost shown.

—For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart pertain to individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the “individual” figures and make these adjustments (note: larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones):

—For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

—For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

—For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

—For a five- or six-person family, subtract 5 percent.

—For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Nutrition Education Division, HNIS, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

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#

CCC ANNOUNCES CHANGES IN PROCEDURE FOR ANNOUNCING LOAN REPAYMENT RATES

WASHINGTON, April 24—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced new procedures effective May 17 for the publication of marketing loan repayment rates.

Posted county prices for wheat, feed grains and soybeans and the honey marketing loan repayment rate are currently announced in the afternoon the day before they are effective. Under the new procedure these prices will be made available to county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service offices and the general public at 7 a.m. Eastern time the day they are effective through USDA's Computerized Information Delivery Service. Additional news releases, if necessary, will be issued later in the day.

The process for announcing the Adjusted World Prices (AWPs) for upland cotton and rice remains unchanged.

Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, said the changes will better ensure program integrity.

"The Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 added oilseed adjusted world prices (AWPs) to the list of prices that are announced on a periodic basis," he said.

The new announcement procedures are:

—The repayment rates for minor oilseeds and the soybean AWP will be announced 7:00 a.m. Eastern time each Friday.

—The honey marketing loan repayment rate and the minor oilseed AWP will be announced 7:00 a.m. Eastern time, the third Friday of the month.

—If the designated Friday is a federal holiday, the announcement will be made the following Monday.

—The posted county prices for wheat, feed grains and soybeans will be announced 7:00 a.m. Eastern time each day.

—All of the loan repayment rates will be effective upon announcement and will be in effect until the next rate is announced.

—The announcement of oilseed marketing loan AWP and repayment rates will begin when loans are available for the 1991 crop of oilseeds.

"The loan repayment rates are an important part of the farm programs because they provide income support to farmers while still allowing the marketing of commodities at competitive prices," Bjerke said.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

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USDA ANNOUNCES SODBUSTER AND SWAMPBUSTER PROVISIONS

WASHINGTON, April 24—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced that conversion of a wetland after Nov. 28, 1990, for production of certain agricultural commodities, sugar cane or annually-tilled crops, will mean loss of eligibility for all USDA benefits to which producers would otherwise be entitled unless the land is restored.

This is one of the major provisions announced today as the final rule for highly erodible land and wetland conservation (Sodbuster and Swampbuster provisions) that could deny producers USDA program benefits if violated.

The proposed rule and a period for public comment were announced March 5. Keith Bjerke, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, said careful consideration was given to all comments received.

"The final rule contains no major changes from those initially proposed," Bjerke said. "However, producers should be aware that, as stated in the proposed rule, additional programs have been added to the previous list of those under which benefits could be lost for Sodbuster and Swampbuster violations."

The provisions are mandated by the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990.

Under the 1990 amendments, benefits can be denied for violations under the Agricultural Conservation Program, the Emergency Conservation Program and the Water Bank Program. Producers should also be aware that under the regulations, Dairy Refund, Dairy Indemnity Payment, Wool and Mohair, and Livestock Feed Programs benefits may be denied if Swampbuster and Sodbuster provisions are violated.

Other major provisions of the final rule are:

- new authority for relief for "good faith" wetland conservation and highly erodible land violations;
- added authority for use of mitigation and restoration of wetlands;
- limited ineligibility of a tenant or renter where the landlord refuses to apply conservation measures necessary for compliance; and
- added requirements for certification of wetlands.

Bjerke said producers should contact their county ASCS offices for further information and to certify compliance with the regulations.

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